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THE

ADVERTISEMENT  
**IMPOSTOR Detected;**

The Performance, from whence all the following Instructions and Contradictions of this Impostor are taken, are contained in a Letter to the R. A. Dr. Conyers, Secretary, received by

**COUNTERFEIT SAINT** *turn'd*  
*inside out.*

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Price One Shilling.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

The Performance, from whence all the following Blasphemies and Contradictions of this Impostor are extracted, is intitled, *A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Conyers Middleton, occasioned by his late Free Enquiry*, Anno. 1749. From Page 196 to the End.

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T H E  
I M P O S T O R  
D E T E C T E D;  
O R, T H E  
C O U N T E R F E I T S A I N T  
Turn'd infide out.

Containing a full Discovery of the horrid Blasphemies, and Impieties, taught by those diabolical Seducers called METHODISTS, under Colour of the only *real Christianity*.

Particularly intended for the Use of the City of *Canterbury*, where that Mystery of Iniquity has lately begun to work.

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By *JOHN KIRKBY*,  
RECTOR OF BLACKMANSTONE in *Kent*.

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*By their Fruits ye shall know them. Matth. vii. 20.*

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L O N D O N:  
Printed for M. COOPER, at the *Globe* in *Pater-*  
*noster Row*.  
MDCCL.

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By JOHN KIRKBY  
Rector of St. Edmund's Church in Kent.

By their Permits respectively known them. Marsh. vii. 20.

L O N D O N :  
Printed for M. Cooper at the Globe in Pall-mall.



THE  
**IMPOSTOR** Detected;  
 OR THE  
**COUNTERFEIT SAINT** *turn'd*  
*inside out.*

**I** Presume I need produce no Arguments to prove, that of all the Enemies of Christianity, they are most to be detested, who secretly dart their Poison against it under a Mask of Sanctity: nor am I afraid of any Blame I can incur, by stripping off the Covering from any of those Seducers, who thus make it their Business to deceive the Unwary.

These Persons carry indeed three distinguishing Marks always along with them, by which they may as certainly be known, as some noxious Animals by the Rankness of their Smell.

The *first* is a peculiar Affectation of expressing themselves throughout all their Discourse, in Scripture Terms; that they may create in their Hearers the highest Opinion of their extraordinary Piety. Which nauseous Abuse of sacred

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Things,



Things, being always to discerning Persons a manifest Discovery of their base Hypocrisy, is for that Reason in Detestation called *Cant*. A Name, which on the contrary is always resented on their Parts, as if seemingly out of the tender Pity they have for Men's Unhappiness, in giving such an Instance of their depraved Taste. And this *Sibboleth* is of so much more Advantage to these spiritual *Ephraimites*, than it heretofore was to the carnal ones; that it is the grand Fucus by which they always colour over their Impostures to delude the Ignorant. It is also their never-failing Weapon of Defence, whenever they find themselves engaged with the more Knowing. For upon these Occasions their constant Asylum is to flee to figurative Expressions of Scripture only, and such as can by any Force be wrested to a Meaning as double as their own Hearts. Of which they have always a sufficient Store to retreat to upon every Occasion; and their whole Art consists in dexterously sculking first behind one, and then another, till they have quite wearied out their Opposers: After which they never fail to triumph for having gained the Honour of a new Conquest. And so far they are in the Right; and we have sufficient Experience to convince us, that whoever is so imprudent as to encounter with such *Proteus's* thus upon their own Ground, is well nigh as sure of being this Way defeated, as he that attempts to fight



fight with his Shadow, or catch hold of a Beam of the Sun.

The *second* visible Mark by which these Seducers may be known with equal Certainty, is their constant Practice of having all their Actions of Religion perform'd as publicly as possible in the Eyes of the World. To insinuate themselves into the good Opinion of the Multitude is the grand End of all their outside Piety; and the less every Action of this Kind is known, the less by them it is always valued. By which they make it abundantly evident to the Eyes of any discerning Person, that the Aim of their Devotion is to draw the Minds of Men rather to the Worship of themselves, than the Worship of God.

A *third* Mark which these Persons carry always along with them is the highest Pretension of their intimate Acquaintance with God and heavenly Things; and a visible Contempt of all that differ from them; as a low Rank of Animals, destitute of the least Sense of Things spiritual. And this haughty Contempt is usually expressed by a disdainful Sneer peculiar to themselves, which they wou'd always have interpreted to be in pure Pity for Men's Blindness.

In short they in every Respect as exactly suit with the Character which our Lord has given of the *Pharisees*, as one Tally suits with another. And yet they can be as free in exclaim-

ing against the Wickedness of those Hypocrites; as some lewd Women are known to be against the Shamefulness of their Trade. This they are forced to do, to avoid being ranked among a Class of Men, which were certainly detested by Christ above most Kinds of Sinners upon Earth; while scarce any Thing can be more plain than this; that, if these Men be not the true Successors of the *Pharisees* in Hypocrisy and spiritual Pride, it is impossible that there shou'd ever be any like them upon Earth; and consequently it was a vain Thing in our Saviour to leave so many Cautions against such. But that there were to be many such false Professors of his Name he knew full well, and has therefore left that infallible Mark to discover them by to the End of the World: *Ye shall know them by their Fruits.* So that we have not the least Occasion to spend our Time fruitlessly in arguing with such eternal Perverters of Truth: For leave them but to themselves, and we shall certainly see them as effectually to contradict their own Pretensions, as if the most subtil of them did it on Purpose. A flagrant Instance of which be pleased to hear from one of the many Blunders made by that gifted Prophet, who has the Honour of being esteemed by many, as the Author of that famous Sect now among us called *Methodists*.

It was the Practice of the *Montanists* in the earliest Ages of the Church to stigmatize Catholic

tholic Christians by the Nick-name of *Animal Men*, boasting themselves to be the only Persons that cou'd merit the Encomium of *Spiritual*. In Conformity with whom this new Apostle will allow none, except such as are endow'd with his Spirit, to be *real*, but only mere *nominal Christians*; and accordingly he has dubbed all others as such, who have more Humility than to presume to his high Pretensions. In which, if it were not in Pity to his miserable Infatuation, it is pleasant to see how dexterously he has discover'd his own Shame, if he had any left, in the Height of his Pharisaical Glorifying over us; and how plainly he has made it appear, what Kind of Spirit that is, which he boasts so much of being led by. For we are so far obliged to him, that he acknowledges us, notwithstanding our Destituteness of his Spirit, yet still to have such an awful Regard for the Saviour of the World (which we heretofore thought mere nominal Christians never had) as to be ashamed and grieved to hear the horrid Blasphemies of professed Deists and Unbelievers, in always doing what lies in their Power to represent that divine Person, as nothing else but a vile Impostor, for doing the greatest Action of Kindness, that possibly cou'd be done to Mankind. This we know to be the only Way, these unhappy Persons have of endeavouring to shame, rally, and laugh us out of what Religion we have. Nor,

according



according to our low Thoughts, can we account it to be any Thing less than a flat Contradiction, for a Man to pretend to have more real Kindness for the same Saviour of the World, than these Mockers of him themselves have; who for any End whatever can express a Desire to have them go on and prosper in thus venting their Spleen against him.

I appeal then to every Person, who is not lost to common Sense, to try whether he can possibly give a more favourable Interpretation to that affectionate Address of this same Prophet to his Friends the blaspheming Deists; when he exhorts them with such seeming Satisfaction to carry on this their great Work, which he prophesies shall within a Century or two bring *England* to be fairly divided between them and such real Christians as himself; to the utter Extirpation of us sorry nominal Christians from having the least Share in it. *Go on, Gentlemen, says he, and prosper, shame these nominal Christians out of that pure Superstition, which they call Christianity. Reason, rally, laugh them out of their dead, empty Forms, void of Spirit, of Faith, of Love.* Here his familiar Imp seems to have owed this Wolf in Sheep's Cloathing a Diskindness, in thus spitefully obliging him to drop his Covering in the Height of his Triumphs over these despised nominal Christians. For let these be as bad, as he pleases to make them in other Respects; it is  
guibrotoe
certain,



certain, if we may believe his own Words, that the pious Shame and Grief they conceive to hear Christ and his Religion thus shamelessly abused, either by this Man or those he here eggs on to it, are Virtues to which both of them are entire Strangers. If therefore we wou'd make him any way consistent with himself, when we hear him declaring his Raptures in the happy Experience he has of the Fulness of Christ, and the Purity of his Love of Christ, with many such like Expressions; we must never imagine that he has all this while the least Regard to the Christ, who suffered on Mount *Calvary*, and is mentioned in the Creed; but that his Mind runs upon quite another Person. And who that Person is, he has here also made a plain Discovery to us.

*First*, it is plain, that the Faith he here boasts of is not Christian Faith. For Christian Faith is founded upon the Holy Scripture. But so far is the Scripture from teaching it to be lawful to wish Men Prosperity in the Commission of Wickedness, under a Pretence of bringing about a supposed Good; that it expressly declares his *Damnation* to be *just*, who thinks it lawful *to do* (and consequently wish others to do) *evil, that Good may come*, [Rom. iii. 8.]

And *secondly*, it is no less plain, that the Love, this counterfeit Saint here shews, is as  
opposite

opposite to the Love of Christ as Darknes is to Light. For certainly Christ has sufficiently declared the Tenderness of his Love to Mankind upon all Occasions. But what sort of Love is this Man's, which can thus conceive a Pleasure, that others shou'd encrease their own Damnation (as we are sure such repeated Blasphemies must do) so it do but promote his own Design; which, by the Means he here takes to bring it about, is impossible to be good?

We have then no Reason to wonder at this Man's consummate Impudence, in bringing all Christians whatsoever by Head and Shoulders into the Number of his Party, who have ever been remarkable for their Piety; when we see him thus free with Christ himself to make him condemn his own Religion. But to acquit these innocent Persons from the impious Guilt, which he has wickedly fixed upon them, let us for Argument's sake suppose in the primitive and purest Ages of the Church, that all the truly Orthodox, as he wou'd have us believe, were Men of his Spirit. If so, we know that in those Times the learned Heathens had both an equal Will and Capacity to blaspheme Christ with his present Friends the Deists: But was it ever known or heard of, that any of those holy Persons made Use of such Methods to call in the Assistance of Heathens, those known Blasphemers of Christ,

thus

thus to shame, rally, and laugh the worst of Christian Heretics, into the Pale of the Church; as he here coaxes from Infidels to bewitch us into his Church? Sure I am that both the Love of Christ, and of the Souls of their Brethren, were too pure in them ever to admit of any such base Helps.

If therefore this be the Spirit, Faith, and Love, which this Man scorns us so much for wanting, may God grant us for ever to want them; and rather continue stedfastly to embrace that Religion, which he spits his Venom so much against, under the Nick-names of *pure Superstition*, a System of *dead empty Forms*, or whatever else the Pride and Malice of his infernal Spirit can suggest to him.

From all which it is apparent what that *Christ, Light, and Spirit within* is, which this Man is so zealous to bring his deluded Hearers to the Acknowledgment of. Nothing can be more certain than that divine Honour is what impure Spirits have been always ambitious of; a remarkable Instance of which we have, in the Attempt which the Devil once made upon the Son of God himself, [*Matth. iii. 9.*] And this it is always his unwearied Endeavour to get from Men by any means whatever. How careful then ought Men to be to avoid being brought under these specious Names to the actual Worship of the Devil, while they think they are performing the pur-



est Service to God. For if this Man's Spirit within be the Object of that Worship, which his Followers are so much more zealous in paying in their beloved Assemblies, than in worshipping the true God with their Brethren, as Duty and Charity obliges them; then he who has not quite lost his Eyes must needs see, that the Devil as certainly carries a Share of their Worship in such Cases, as he did from the more knowing Heathens in their idolatrous Temples; who yet were as ignorant as these deluded Persons are that they worshipped any Thing else, but the true God himself.

But if any Person, out of Charity to the Man, be apt to suspect what he here says to be only some rash Slip, and not the Result of his more settled Thoughts; I wou'd advise such a one to consider how this can be reconciled, not only with the infallible Inspiration he pretends to, but with the Tendency of his whole Discourse in that Place. The whole Book, of which that is a Part, is recommended to the World with the utmost pretended Zeal for the Defence of what he afterwards hypocritically calls the *Traditional Evidence of Christianity* against Deists and Unbelievers. Which plainly appears to be with no other View than, Mountebank like, to use Christianity as his Fool for no other End but to gather a Crowd about his Stage, that himself or some for him, may have a fairer Opportunity to pick People's Pockets,

or



or at least to vend his Trash. For what else Means the vile Use he afterwards makes of the Evidence of Christianity, when he joins so heartily with the Deists in making it appear as contemptible as he can, in order to make Way for his own Light (or rather Jack-a-Lantern) within?

And yet notwithstanding all, to give us a Specimen of his matchless Impudence, he demurely says, *I do not undervalue traditional Evidence. Let it have its due Place and Honour. It is highly serviceable in its Kind, and in its Degree. And yet I cannot set it on a Level with this (i. e. his Light within.)* No, by no Means. It wou'd be a surprizing Thing indeed for a Man like him to do it so great an Honour.

Shou'd I now go about to shew what this Man means by what he calls the traditional Evidence of Christianity; it wou'd only be giving him an Advantage against me, in thus vainly fighting him, as was observed before, upon his own Ground. For were I in this or any other Case to prove ever so clearly that his Light within him is Darkness; he wou'd still keep up his Front in disdainfully smiling at my Ignorance. And whoever has the Assurance to tax him with Hypocrisy will be sure to find himself outfaced with more Assurance. Which we know to be always the Way of such like, who, as long as they think they have the least Screen to shelter themselves behind,

will continually make it one of the greatest Wonders, that Men can be so unreasonable as to bring their Honesty in Question. All which, when we examine it a little more, may sufficiently convince us, that this precious Prophet has got indeed Assurance enough, not of his Holiness and Happiness, as he so often Pharisaically boasts, but of his matchless Impudence and Wickedness, in thus even barefacedly shewing his Contempt of Christ and his Religion, under Pretence of the greatest Kindness to both.

But yet, to pass by this Man's Assurance, which I acknowledge my Inability in any Case to cope with: I will venture to give a Specimen or two of it, that you may perceive how much he boasts the Religion of his Christ within to surmount the Religion of our crucified Saviour.

Our Lord then himself has taught us, *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed* [John xx. 29.] Agreeable to which St. Paul says, *We are saved by Hope: But Hope that is seen is not Hope, &c.* [Rom. viii. 24.] And according to the same Apostle we Christians have always thought, that in this Life Men were never to have Faculties given them suited to view Things invisible and eternal, in any Case whatever; but that in this Life they were always to steer their Course by the Eyes of Faith only; which we have hitherto judged was

was the Apostle's Meaning, when he says, *We now see through a Glass darkly* (i. e. by Reflexion, which is the only Vision we can have by a Glass); *but then* (says he) *Face to Face*, (i. e. directly without Reflexion.) See 1 Cor. xiii. 12. which same Meaning we think also he has, when he says, [2 Cor. v. 7.] *For we walk by Faith, and not by Sight.* Agreeable to which again we presume St. John has the same Meaning, when he says [1 John iii. 2.] *Beloved, it does not yet appear what we shall be.* But so much is the Faith of this Man, above what our Christ has ever allowed us to hope for, that if we may believe him, *it shews them Things invisible and eternal in the clearest Light, with the fullest Certainty and Evidence.* For (says he) *it leaves not us to receive our Notices of them by mere Reflexion from the dull Glass of Sense: but resolves a Thousand Enigmas of the highest Concern by giving Faculties suitable to Things invisible.* Here perhaps the Terms *Sense* and *Faculties* are Holes through which this Blasphemer of the Scriptures will endeavour to creep out; and when he is taxed with contradicting the Word of God, he will flee to his usual Resort of giving his own Words what Meaning he pleases. This it seems is a Privilege peculiar to Men endowed with this Light within, that they can always use and turn Words into what Sense they think convenient. And we must always take it as a

Rule



Rule with them, that the holy Scriptures are not to be supposed to be a Guide to their Light within, but their Light is the sole Guide, by which Men are to interpret them. For the Scriptures at best are but a dead Letter, whereas their Light is a continual living Inspiration; and tho' God may seem to contradict himself in the former, yet he can never do it in the latter. So that it seems we have hitherto been so far mistaken in thinking Faith like Hope [Rom. viii. 24, 25.] to be different from such actual Enjoyment; that no Man can be said to have true Faith, who has not one Time or other had as perfect a Sight of invisible Things, as St. *Stephen* just before his Martyrdom [Acts viii. 55.] or St. *Paul* when he was wrapt up into the third Heaven [2 Cor. xii. 2—4.] Privileges, which we imagin'd had very rarely been granted, but to the best of Men, and to those only upon extraordinary Occasions.

We have also it seems been all along so ignorant as not to have had the least true Knowledge of Scripture, i. e. of the metaphorical and figurative Parts of it; which can only be discerned by such spiritual Persons as those, who seldom use any Parts else. And particularly our Ignorance is in nothing more plain than in that low Interpretation we put upon such Passages as these of St. *Paul*, [Phil. ix. 13.] *I can do all Things through Christ which strengtheneth me*, which we presume cou'd ne-



ver be meant of *all Things* any otherwise than  
 of Things which Christ required, and thus en-  
 abled him to perform. And this Performance  
 in the best of Men we think to be very imper-  
 fect, according to that plain Text of St. James  
 [Chap. iii. 2.] where he says, *In many Things*  
*we offend all.* But by this Man's Faith of  
 what he has the utmost Certainty in (a Contra-  
 diction in Terms,) or more properly, by his  
 pretended *Light within*, he boasts that every  
 one of his Christians is *peculiarly and inexpress-  
 sibly happy in the highest and fullest Conviction.*  
 In which high Sense he says, that his *Love* is  
*productive of all right Affections, and of all right*  
*Actions.* It carries him to an uniform Prac-  
 tice of Justice and Mercy, equally extensive  
 with the Principle whence it flows. It con-  
 strains him to do all possible Good of every possi-  
 ble Kind to all Men: it makes him invariably  
 resolved in every Circumstance of Life. He  
 knows how to use all Things in their proper  
 Place, and yet is superior to them in all. In  
 short, if we can believe him, he is as absolute-  
 ly perfect as ever Christ himself was. But  
 then he is above Christ in this, that Christ  
 thought fit to convince Men of his divine Abi-  
 lities by Miracles, [John v. 31—36.] while  
 this Man expects all bound to acknowledge the  
 Divinity of his *Light within*, upon his own  
 bare Word. Much more is he above St. Peter  
 and St. Paul, who according to him cou'd be

no real Christians [*Gal. ii. 11, 12. and 2 Cor. xii. 7.*] after each had actually received the Holy Ghost [*Acts ii. 1-8. Acts ix. 15-18.*] and done much more to prove themselves real Christians, than (I believe) ever he will do for the Proof of his pretended *Light within.*

Whence, let it be observed that, according to this Man's Principles, no Man can be said to have Christian Faith, who is not actually so crackt in his Head, as to persuade himself falsely, that he has all those high Perfections he here speaks of, within him. For if he be so perfectly certain of having them, as has been already said, it is no longer Faith but Fruition; and he is already in Possession of what every good Christian here is only to hope for hereafter. Consequently, no Man can be one of his real Christians, who does not really some Way labour under the same Disorder, which *Festus* supposed to have seized this Man's Antagonist *St. Paul.* And how far he confesses this will be seen by and by. From whence we have a very fine Prospect of the Faith he prides himself so much in preaching up, in Scorn of all others.

And here I cannot forbear taking Notice again of the Privilege this Man's Spirit gives him in his arbitrary Interpretation, not only of the Words of Scripture, but of his own Words; which are both equally a Nose of Wax to him, whenever he is put to a Pinch. Thus in his foregoing

foregoing Blasphemies, I think no reasonable Man can suppose him to mean any less by them, than that he who is once possessed of his Spirit is set quite above the Reach of Sin. Agreeable to which in another Performance intitled, *An earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, he seems with his accustomed Assurance to front the whole World, in the Behalf of himself and his Followers, with that Challenge of our Saviour [*John viii. 46.*] *Which of you convinceth us of Sin?* What he means by *Sin* is hard for any Person to know; nor is it worth the while to seek after. For let that be how it will, notwithstanding all his sanctified Pretensions, he has given the plainest Demonstration that he has got his Share of it, as well as his Brother Labourer at *Shrewsbury*: nor is there Room for any one to doubt, but that both were richly endowed with the same Spirit. And I suppose it to be some such Discoveries as these, that has made him so flily turn his Tale in the same Performance, when he joins with us nominal Christians in affirming (Page 26.) that *Christian Perfection does not imply an Exemption from Ignorance, or Infirmities, or Temptations.* But can any one think it to be the same Person, who was Author of the Letter to Dr. *Middleton*, wherein he allows no Man to be a real Christian but one of the following Character, which if we will believe him, is the infallible Consequence

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of



of being endowed with his Spirit? For such a one he roundly affirms to be always free from the painful Swellings of Pride, from the Flames of Anger, from the impetuous Gusts of irregular Self-will. He is no longer tortured with Envy or Malice, or with unreasonable or hurtful Desire. He is no more enslaved to the Pleasures of Sense, but has the full Power both over his Mind and Body, in a continued, cheerful Course of Sobriety, of Temperance and Chastity. He knows how to use all Things in their proper Place, and yet is superior to them all.—He stands steady and collected in himself—in Honour or Shame, in Abundance or Want, in Ease or in Pain, in Life or in Death, always and in all Things he has learned to be content, to be easy, thankful, joyful, happy. One wou'd think Contradictions can hardly be more strongly expressed than in these two Passages. Yet that the same Person is Author of both, himself has taken Care to let People know, in the great Ambition he has shewn in the News-Papers not to be robbed of the Honour of this his accomplished Letter; which from Page 196 may deservedly be received, as the Alcoran of the Methodists; as it pretends to give us there a short System of their Religion, in Opposition to what he scornfully calls *nominal Christianity*. But that ever Mortal shou'd be so prophane, as to imagine one of these gifted Persons, capable thus to contradict himself! this, they will

will gravely tell you, can be resolved into nothing else, but the Blindness of Men's Hearts, who have not their Senses sufficiently exercised to discern spiritual Things. Thus are Men always to be bantered out of their Senses. And it wou'd make even a Statue shew its Indignation, if it cou'd hear with what harden'd Impudence, this Man frequently appeals to Reason, for what, if he had his right Wits, himself cou'd not but know to be contrary to all common Sense. But it seems let any of these counterfeit Saints say what he will, be it ever so absurd, ever so impious; all the Fault must still lie upon Men's Incapacity to understand him.

But the most accomplished Artifice this Spirit has taught his Emissaries, to gain Profelytes by, comes still behind. By which it must be confessed, if we will not allow his *Church* to pass for *holy*; yet we are forced to grant it in his own Way to be *catholic*. And that is by making it perfectly reconcileable to Persons of all Opinions. By which Fetch again this old experienced Sophister has taught these devout Worshippers of him to make it so far *holy*, that right or wrong they can lay claim to all Persons of all Denominations whatever, who have ever been reputed for Holiness, from the Beginning of the World till the End of it, as Members of their Church. But then, methinks, it wou'd be but fair, to take along

with them too all the remaining Part of the World, how infamous soever they either have been or shall be for their Villany, with the Devil himself at the Head of them. For I believe few can doubt whether most of these will not effectually acquit themselves of Blame, if it be put to their own Opinion. But lest any one shou'd think I am too severe upon the Members of this Church, be pleased to take another Taste of the impious Cant of this Prophet, who always makes Men's inward Assurance of having his Spirit to be the whole Sum and Substance of Religion, and the infallible Mark by which they may be assured of their Acceptance with God. For if a Man have but this, *Forgive* (says he) *his Particularities of Opinion, and (what you think) superstitious Modes of Worship. These are Circumstances but of small Concern; and don't enter into the Essence of his Character. Cover them with a Veil of Love, and look at the Substance; his Tempers, his Holiness, his Happiness. Can calm Reason conceive either a more amiable or a more desirable Character. Is it (this Character) his own? Away with Names! Away with Opinions! I care not what you are called. I ask not (it does not deserve a Thought) what Opinion you are of; so you are conscious to your self, that you are the Man, whom I have been (however faintly) describing. And to make his Meaning still more plain,*



plain, if possible, concerning the Contempt he has for all the Externals of Christianity; he again expressly declares that Men may effectually have this internal or rather infernal Assurance, *and bold Opinions, which cannot be defended.* Here the Angel of Darkness has made his incarnate Appearance as visible as possible in the Person of this unhappy Man. For what else but a Devil incarnate can have the Impudence to face down the World; as he does, that he is not only a sincere Christian, but one of the most faithful Sons also of the Church of *England*; while he is here openly professing a Religion, if it may be lawful to call it such, which is as opposite to Christianity as Hell is to Heaven? But what will not such industrious Agents of Satan do to carry forward their Master's Work; who can make so diabolical a Perversion of *St. Paul's* Words in thus being *made all Things to all Men, that by all Means they may destroy some?*

We will humour him so far, as to confine, what he here shews his Contempt so much of under the Titles of *Superstitious Modes, Names, and Opinions*, only to what belongs to Christianity. Tho' no Question needs be made, whether one of his Stamp cannot upon occasion make his Christ within equally applicable to *Jew, Turk, or Gentile.* For these can all join with him in professing only one supreme God,

God, and have no other Difference from one another, in Religious Matters, but in their different Opinions about him. But, to confine ourselves only to such Persons as pretend to Christianity: Don't we know several of these to join so far with him in his Spiritual Worship, as not only to deny that Christ ever consecrated a Succession of Men to be the sole Dispensers of the Sacraments he instituted; but also to put an equal Slight upon the Use of such instituted Means of Grace at all? In which yet I think that Sect of Pretenders to the Spirit to be far more consistent with themselves than others, who reject the former and hold to the latter.

But let Men's Opinions about these Things be what they will, all are alike to him, even tho' they *cannot be defended*. It will be hard to conceive what this Chameleon can suppose shou'd make any Opinion incapable of being defended, when at the same Time he thus holds all of them to be Things quite insignificant. But Nonsense is the smallest of his Failings. Nor can any one tell well what he means by Opinions. However, I will for once make bold to confine his Meaning of the Word Opinion to Men's Thoughts only concerning the external Modes of Christian Worship. Since then all Pretenders to Christianity are either *first*, such as hold the religious Modes of Baptism, and the Eucharist to be Things

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sacred;

sacred; or *secondly*, such as account the same to be nothing else but mere Superstitions: it follows, according to him, that both Men's Opinions about these are Things of no manner of Consequence; for if he had thought otherwise, he must have made his Exceptions. And thus we have the Holy Sacraments of Baptism and the tremendous Body and Blood of Christ depreciated as no other than *Superstitious Modes of Worship, Circumstances but of small Concern, Things which deserve not a Thought*. This is the Language he uses to ingratiate himself with a *Quaker* or *Muggletonian*; while to an ignorant Church of *England* Man, as he has here order'd it, he can screen himself under the Word *Superstitious*, and demurely tell him; *Alas, I here mean only such Modes of Worship as are purely Superstitious: How then can it be imagined, that I, who am so diligent in administering the Sacraments my self, shou'd esteem those such?*

And is this, do you think, a fit Person to be admitted into those Holy Orders, which he so much despises; or that he shou'd have the least to do either with the Administration or Partaking of those Sacraments, which, it is plain, he only uses as a Cloak to his Knavery? Whenever then this pretended Reformer makes the Faults he spies in the Church of *England* to be the Subject of his Insults over us, (which we know are always to him the most delici-

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ous Food;) can any one conclude, but that we richly deserve it, for still retaining such Vipers in her Bosom? And I presume the present Church can hardly be taxed with a more wretched Neglect, than for tamely suffering the Table of the Lord to be so frequently polluted with the Company of these unparalleled *Catholics*; which by all true Christians can be judged as nothing less than the prophane-  
 6117 st Prostitution of the blessed Body and Blood of Christ to the worst of Purposes. For what can be worse, than thus to turn the most sacred Mysteries of holy Religion to serve only for a Cover to the most hellish Hypocrisy?

But again to descend lower than the immediate Institutions of Christ himself, shou'd we only take Notice of those which his Apostles established for the standing Form of the Government and Discipline of the Church: Certainly no Person can be accounted a Christian who uses these themselves with this Man's Contempt. It was for this Purpose, we know, that Christ promised to the Apostles the Holy Ghost to *guide them into all Truth*. [*John* xvi. 13.] Consequently, whatever these holy Persons unanimously ordained for these Ends was to be for ever unalterable by the highest Authority of Man; unless we can impiously suppose that Christ left his Church so imperfect at the Beginning, as afterwards to stand in Need of human Amendment. Whereas nothing can  
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be more certain, than that this original Platform was under Christ the Head designed to be the Center of all external Unity of Religion among Men; at all Times, and in all Places, from the Beginning of the World to the End. And Men were commanded to shew no less awful Regard to these, than to any other Command of Christ.

What high Account the Apostles themselves made of these *Circumstances* of Religion, which this Man reckons *not to deserve a Thought*, may be seen by any one, who attentively reads the fifteenth Chapter of their *Acts*, together with the eleventh Chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the *Corinthians*. So great a Stranger was that particular Apostle to this Man's universal complying Spirit in such Matters, that when certain Judaizing Teachers endeavour'd to bring back the *Galatians* to the Observances of the Mosaic Law, he wou'd not give Place by Subjection, no not for an Hour; that the Truth of the Gospel might continue: [Gal. ii. 5.] and he exhorts the *Thessalonians* to follow the like Example in standing fast, and holding the Traditions they had been taught, whether by Word or Epistle; at the same Time commanding them in the Name of the Lord Jesus, to withdraw themselves from every Brother that walked contrary to the same [2 *Thess.* ii. 15. and iii. 6.] According to which again St. *John* makes it

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to be the certain Mark by which *the Spirit of Truth* is to be distinguished from *the Spirit of Error*; that *he that knoweth God heareth* (i. e. obeyeth) *us*; but *he that is not of God heareth* (i. e. obeyeth) *not us*. [1 John iv. 6.]

And certainly, these first Founders of the Church were not so strict in thus requiring the perpetual Obedience of Mankind to all their unanimous Injunctions of this Kind, but for the weightiest Cause. Which appears in the three following Respects.

*First*, It was absolutely necessary to vindicate the Honour of Christ, that his Church shou'd never be necessitated to put on different Faces in different Ages or Places. Christianity is and can be but one and the same, like its first Author himself, *who is the same, Yesterday, and to Day, and for ever*, [Heb. xiii. 8.] When Men speak of the Unity of the Church, no more is often understood, than that it ought always to be under the same Authority in all Places at the same Time. But certainly this is a Conception quite too narrow to be applied to the Catholic Church of Christ; which not only takes in all the Members of it at one Time, but at all Times; from the Time of its first Formation to the End of the World. [Matth. xxviii. 20.] *The Promise*, says St. Peter, *is to you and to your Children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call*, [Acts ii. 39]. And were to be trained up in Nothing else,



esse, as to Matters of Religion, but the same Belief and Practice; which was universally taught by Christ and his Apostles, with their immediate Successors: so that all might make up but *one Body united by one Spirit, called in one Hope, owning one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism*, [Eph. iv. 4, 5.] Consequently, every Thing different from the primitive Model, which has at any Time or Place been imposed upon Christians under a Shew of Religion, is to be esteemed as no Part of Christianity it self; but the mere Invention of Men. For whatever was thus jointly established by the original Founders of the Catholic Church (who, we know, were in all Respects sufficiently qualified for that great Work) must for that Reason be perfectly agreeable to the Will of God, and can have nothing more fitly adapted to answer the same End. For any Power therefore upon Earth to presume afterwards to add to, or diminish from, much more entirely to change, any of these primitive Injunctions, is blasphemously to suppose that God himself was ignorant what might hereafter be most suitable and advantageous to the State of his Church. Or if the Necessity of such an Alteration in any Respect be attributed to the Short-sightedness of the Apostles; what an indelible Reproach wou'd this be upon Christianity? For where the Foundation is weak, the Superstructure cannot be strong; and if the

Fountain itself be tainted, it can hardly be expected, that the Stream coming from it shou'd be pure. Again, what a Dishonour must it be to the Son of God, to have it thought that his Religion, which was to keep Mankind together to himself in the most perfect Unity and Agreement with one another, shou'd itself be the Cause of the greatest Confusion and Discord among them? And yet this Dishonour we see brought upon him by the many lamentable Differences among Christians at this Day in Matters of Religion. All which had been entirely prevented, if Men had been as faithful, as they ought to have been, in their Obedience to these primitive Traditions. For as soon as ever Men came afterwards so far to forget themselves and their Duty, as to new model these according to their own Dreams and Phanxies, or rather to serve their own sinister Aims; the Barriers were then broke down, by which Christ had enclosed his Vineyard, and a Gap was open'd for all those endless Divisions and Innovations, which have happen'd ever since; and which the Spirit, or rather God, of this unhappy Man with a malicious Pleasure beholds. The first Breach made Way for a second, and that second again for a third, till at Length that once pleasant Spot lay wholly exposed to every Destroyer. Nor can we reasonably expect how it shou'd be otherwise. For when they came once so far to presume upon the

the joint Authority of those holy Persons, who cou'd so sensibly prove their Commission from God; how hardly cou'd it be expected, that more Obedience shou'd be shewn to any of their Successors afterwards? When therefore we look upon these Apostolical Institutions only as they are in themselves, it appears that they were Things of so exceedingly tender a Nature, as not to endure the least blowing upon without being tarnished, nor the smallest Alteration without being effectually spoiled. But if we cannot be wrought up to a due Awe and Veneration for these Things out of a Sense of the Obligation we lie under to maintain the Honour of Christ and his holy Religion; let us then consider how much we are concern'd in it ourselves. For,

*Secondly*, we know of no Way, ordinarily speaking, of gaining Acceptance with God; but as we are Members of his visible Church upon Earth. But how can he be accounted a Member of that Church, who scornfully despises the sacred Injunctions of the Apostles themselves: those Foundation Stones united with Christ, upon which the whole stands? [*Eph. ii. 20.*] How such a one is to be accounted, even in ordinary Matters, Christ himself has told us, [*Matth. xviii. 17.*] What then can be thought of so notorious an Impugner as this? It is by our sincere Obedience to those holy Persons, that we are to expect all our



our spiritual Nourishment from Christ the *vine*. In which, if a Man abide not, he is cast forth as a Branch, and is withered [John xv. 6.] Such is the Malignity of not thus holding the Head, from which all the Body by Joints and Bands having Nourishment ministered and knit together, encreaseth with the Encrease of God, [Col. ii. 19.] Shou'd no other ill Consequence follow this to the Church, than what naturally springs from Disunion to Society in general, itself is enough to make us for ever lament so great a Mischief. But when we consider, that this is not only a Man's wilful Separation of himself from the Church of Christ, but from Christ himself; from all those heavenly Graces and Influences, which redound upon all such as continue faithful Members of this mystical Body; no Words can be sufficient to express the Greatness of the Loss to the Man himself, how much soever he despises it. But, *Thirdly*, This Contempt of the Authority of the Apostles and first Founders of Christianity (in the Externals of Religion, were it to go no further) is not only a Contempt of Christ, and what is of most Consequence to the Man himself, but it is also an Affront against even common Sense; and much more against the Knowledge peculiar to a Christian. Man, we know, is a Being compounded of Body and Spirit, and for that Reason is equally obliged to glorify God in his Body as well as Spirit [Rom. xii.

xii. 1. 1 Cor. vi. 20.] nor can we otherwise give the least sensible Evidence (which is all the Evidence we naturally receive from one another) that we are Members of Christ's Body. So that the Church cou'd not otherwise subsist as a Society of Men, than by those external Ties, established by its first Founders as the only known Marks of the Unity of its Members with one another, and all of them with Christ. For this Reason it was, that the Apostles presumed not to impose the least Thing upon Christians, as a Duty of Religion, but only as they actually received it from Christ himself; nor did they require Obedience to their Commands upon any other Account, than as it was a necessary Manifestation of Men's unfeigned Obedience to him, [Rom. xiv. 23. 2 Cor. i. 24.] that is, as it was the real Effect of Men's Love and Esteem for him, Submission and Gratitude to him, Trust and Confidence in him. Which is nothing else but the Obedience of that Faith [Rom. xvi. 26.] without which it is impossible to please God [Heb. xi. 6.] The Faith, which Christ requires, is only such a Faith as *worketh by Love* [2 Cor. v. 14. Gal. v. 6.] and we can judge no otherwise of the Sincerity of that Love, than by the Sincerity of our Obedience to these, as well as his other Commandments, [John xiv. 23. 1 John v. 3.] But how can they be said to have any just Love or Esteem for Christ  
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or his Father, who can put such a Slight upon those very Persons, to whom Christ himself said, *He that beareth you, beareth me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth me: and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me?* [Luke x. 16.]

Thus you have seen of what high Concern a close Adherence to the *Modes* and *Circumstances* of Christian Worship is, not only to the Church of God in general, but to every Christian in particular. But how can it be imagined that this Man has the least Concern for the most sacred of those; when he so barefacedly despises all in general, without condescending to mention one in particular? Away with all such worthless Superstition from the pure Religion of this precious Saint; which consists only in this *unum Necessarium*, that a Man be assured in himself of his own Holiness and Happiness. Let him always have but Assurance enough and he is safe enough. So that with him the whole of a Man's Religion is to have the highest Conceit of himself, to trust in and obey no other but himself. After which it is only giving this accomplished Assurance the Name of Christ within him, and calling that Spirit, which is the Author of it, sometimes God, and sometimes the Holy Ghost; and immediately no Man can become a purer Lover, or a more devout Adorer of Christ and the blessed Trinity, than he; who by such means is hence-

forward



forward thoroughly furnished to set up for a gifted Brother, and may whenever he pleases pray in the Language of a Saint to Beelzebub himself.

Here you have the whole Scheme of this Man's Religion; which with his accustomed Assurance he calls *the System of Christianity*, allowing nothing else to have the least Right to the Name: as doubtless nothing else has in his Sense of the Word. But the greatest Difficulty he finds is in bringing the Scriptures to his Side. For the Attainment of which he has no other Way, but to fly to his common Recourse in assuming an Authority by Virtue of his Light within to turn and wiredraw them to what Sense he pleases. We are apt to imagine that the Character he gives his real Christian can never be found in Scripture applied to any mere Mortal upon Earth. But we are much mistaken in one of his Abilities to entertain the least Doubt, that he cannot only find that for us, but express Scripture-Promises of it too. And were it not in Indignation to hear the Words of God himself so miserably abused and blasphemed, by the Ways and Means he uses to bring this about; it is pleasant to observe his frequent Blunders and Inconsistencies, by which he every now and then again discovers the cloven Foot of his Spirit.

*Christianity*, he says, *describes this Character in all its Parts, — in many Passages of the old Testament.* But where they are he has left us to seek. It is no Matter, he says so; therefore it is only Want of Faith, which can make Men not believe that it is so. But yet, I suppose, he himself thought these *Passages* imperfect, which made him go on as follows. *These are filled up in the new* [I suppose again he means *the new Testament*,] *retouched and finished with all the Art of God.* Here, not to take Notice of the uncommon Delicacy, which runs through all the Parts of this Flourish of Rhetoric, I shall only fix upon the three last Words of it, *Art of God*; which must certainly be acknowledged to be a Master-piece of his Eloquence. But how to reconcile it with the great God of Heaven and Earth, whom I suppose he here means; this I must confess to be quite beyond my Skill, without bringing it upon the nearest Borders to Blasphemy. I have often heard of the *Wisdom and Knowledge of God*, but never before of the *Art of God*. One wou'd have thought he might have carried on his foolish Metaphor, in comparing the Almighty thus to a Painter or Artificer, full as well by saying *retouched and finished by God himself*. But who, except a Man of his Taste, wou'd ever presume to apply either *Art* or *Cunning* to the Being of all Perfection? It will indeed agree perfectly well,

well, when applied to the black God, whom he (I hope unwittingly) worships. *For we are not ignorant of his Arts and Devices* [2 Cor. ii. 11.] One, not the least considerable of which, is to train up Disciples thus to *retouch and finish* the Scriptures. A Cheat, which he attempted to put upon the Son of God himself; and therefore it is less to be wonder'd at, that he is so industrious to put the same upon us [Mattb. iv. 6.]

His first Attempt to fetch the Character, he gives his pretended real Christian, from Scripture, is upon our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, and upon the thirteenth Chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to the *Corinthians*. But I presume the most zealous Methodist of this Man's Cast cannot reasonably tax us with doing Injustice to this real Christian, if we draw his Character from the Practice of their Prophet himself, rather than from the Scripture. Surely it will not be denied but that he himself must be a real Christian; and it is much less reasonable to expect this Character from Scripture, which at best is but a dead Letter, than from the living Oracle himself by which only the Scripture is to be interpreted? And if so, then let us look back again upon his before remarkable Behaviour, and see how well it agrees with what our Lord himself has said in that Sermon. Particularly, while you are making this Comparison, fix your Eye upon



*Matth. v. 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 19, 20. vi. 1—7, 16—18, 22, 23. vii. 1—5, 15—23.* Again in the abovemention'd Chapter of *St. Paul*, look how contrary this Man's Charity is to the Charity there described in the 4th and 6th Verses. And had he any Shame in him, as has before been observed, he cou'd never have the Front to apply those Words of the Apostle Verse the 12th, to the Character of his Christian, which he has been shewn before so manifestly to contradict in that very Character.

But still with a *Face harder than a Rock*, [*Jer. v. 3.*] he persists that both the Old Testament and New promise this Character to be his, who will not rest till he attains it. What he means by the Man's *not resting till he attains it*, is what he has never told us: But by what comes afterwards we may perhaps be able to make some Guess at it. In the mean Time let us hear how ingeniously he makes these Promises out. Why, the new Testament he says, *is in Effect all a Promise*. If you ask how he makes that appear, he gives this invincible Reason, *seeing every Description of the Servants of God mentioned therein, has the Nature of a Command; in Consequence of these general Injunctions* [*1 Cor. xi. 1. Heb. vi. 12.*] *And every Command has the Force of a Promise; in Virtue of these general Promises*, *Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. Heb. viii. 10.* Accordingly when it is said, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God* with

with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind [*Mat. xxii. 37.*] *it is not only a Direction, what I shall do; but a Promise of what God will do in me: exactly equivalent with what is written elsewhere, Deut. xxx. 6.* Here you have all the Man has to say to prove the Promise of the Character (or rather, the pretended divine Accomplishments) of his Christian from Scripture. In which any one may see his fallacious Quibbling, to make what he pleases pass for a Promise: And all just about as much to his Purpose, as if it had been fetched from *Lilly's Grammar*. He may, if he will, refer that Promise in *Ezekiel* to what he quotes from the eighth Chapter to the *Hebrews*. All which, we know, amounts to no more than what was fulfilled by the more spiritual Commands given under the Gospel, than what had formerly been enjoined by the *Mosaic Law*. And if we consult any honest Commentator upon these Passages, we shall not find the least Advantage given from them to this Man's Cause; except it be from those Modes of Speech, which his black Spirit always uses as a Handle to make the Holy Scriptures appear nothing else, but a senseless Rhapsody of Contradictions.

Next, he proceeds to tell us how this Promise of his own making is to be attained; which he now says is *by what he calls Faith*: a Part of which we have already heard. Before, he said,

said, It was to be had by a *Man's not resting till he have it.* Very instructive truly! But now, when he comes to shew us what he means by extraordinary Expression, we meet *that* with a much more extraordinary Explanation; which is this, that a Man is to be entirely at rest, and do nothing at all of himself, till he has it. I challenge any Person in the World to make any Thing else, with respect to the Work a Man does of himself to attain it, of all that blasphemous Jargon he uses in the Description he afterwards gives of his Faith: which, beside the former pretended supernatural *Power wrought in the Soul* of seeing Things invisible and eternal, resolves the Whole again into nothing at all but the boasted inward Assurance of his own Holiness and Happiness. I call it blasphemous, because he not only basely belies Christianity, in affirming it to make such a Representation of Faith; but also so often brings in the sacred Names of God and his Son, to carry on his most impious Abuse of both. And thus we have a full Prospect of what all this Man's Religion centers in, which he sometimes calls *Faith*, sometimes *the Light shining in the Heart*, sometimes *the internal Evidence of Christianity*; just as his familiar Spirit puts it into his Head.

Yet this is the Man that insults and abuses all other Christians, as follows. *May I,* says he, *without Offence, ask of you that are called Christians;*



Christians; What Loss would you sustain, in giving up your present Opinion [i. e. in giving up your Senses, by acknowledging] that the [i. e. his] Christian System is of God? Though you bear the Name, you are not Christians now: you have neither Christian Faith nor Love: you have no divine Evidence of Things unseen: you have not yet enter'd into the Holiest by the Blood of Jesus. — You are neither happy nor holy. — You are not holy in Heart, superior to Pride, to Anger, to foolish Desires. Neither are you holy in Life. Observe another Blunder of this Hypocrite; let any one try how he can conceive a Man to be holy in Life, and yet unholy in Heart. But to proceed, You do not walk as Christ also walked. Does not the main of your Christianity lie in your Opinion, decked with a few outward Observances? Here again you not only see what light Account he makes of all outward Observances; but have another Taste also of his wonderful Sagacity, who can conceive a Man to be of a Religion without entertaining any Opinion at all about it. I suppose this again is one of the thousand Enigmas about Things invisible and eternal, which he says his Faith resolves to him: That is, all consists of nothing else but a reconciling of Contradictions. Of which, no Doubt a Man might be enabled to pick out a Thousand, who had the Opportunity of hearing but a few of his spiritual Discourses. But to conclude this

Triumph

Triumph of his over us poor nominal Christians, for as to *Morality*, even honest *Heathen Morality* (O let me utter a melancholy Truth) many of those whom you stile *Deists*, there is reason to fear have more of it than you. After which follows his impious Parænesis to his Friends the *Deists*, as was before remarked, in helping him to *shame*, *rally*, and *laugh* such as he calls *nominal Christians* into their own two Churches. From all which again it is evident, that all his pretended Zeal, before shew'd against Dr. *Middleton*, was ultimately intended against Christianity.

Deism and this Man's Methodism appear therefore at present to be the two grand Devices, by which the Enemy of Mankind levels his Force against Christianity. Christianity, he knows full well, is the only Armour of Defense, by which Men can be enabled to bear up against his Attacks; and consequently it is no wonder for him to endeavour, either to rob us of that, or make it be of no Service to us. To which Purpose he applies these two Instruments, as follows. The former wou'd make us believe that the Devil is nothing but an empty Name, or mere Bugbear, contrived on Purpose to terrify Children and Fools: the latter advances the same wicked Spirit into the Place of God himself, making his diabolical Illusions and Suggestions pass for the Operations of the Holy Ghost. The former wou'd make  
Christianity

Christianity appear to be nothing but a cunning Design: and on the quite contrary the latter transforms it at best into nothing but downright Madness. Thus we see how artfully the Tempter blows hot and cold with the same Breath, and makes Contrarieties equally subservient, to his Purpose. So that while these two Agents like *Samson's* Foxes look quite opposite Ways, yet both are of the same Use, to carry forward their Master's Aim; which, were it in his Power, is to burn up Christianity out of the World, that he might be no longer troubled with a Thing so contrary to his Designs. But yet of these two Agents I think the former is preferable to the latter in this, that he acts more openly and in Sight; while the latter more like Satan himself, works always under Ground, and endeavours to turn our own Weapons unawares upon ourselves, under the false Disguise of a Friend.

I shall only give you one Taste more of this Man's pretended Pity for our Ignorance out of this Alcoran of his; which I rather chuse to do, as it seems to be a Master-piece of his Eloquence and Hypocrisy. Where he breaths forth the Longings of his Soul for that happy Time, when all Men, as he prophesies, shall be brought to his Religion. O, says he, *that the Time were come! How do I long for you to be Partakers of the exceeding great and precious*

G Promise!



*Promise! How am I pained* [So that you see this perfectly happy Man is yet subject to conceive Pain at an Affront] *when I hear any of you using these silly Terms, which the Men of Form have taught you, calling the Mention of the only Thing they want* [to make them compleat Villains] *Cant! the deepest Wisdom, the highest Happiness, Enthusiasm! What Ignorance is this! How extremely despicable wou'd it make you in the Eyes of any* [i.e. of any, who possibly can have no Eyes at all to see into it: mark the admirable Sense] *but a Christian* [i.e. his Christian.] *But he* [good Man] *cannot despise you* [tho' at the same Time he reckons you as much below him as the vilest Animal,] *who loves you as his own Soul, who is ready to lay down his Life for your Sake.* Do you think his Love for us can be so great, as he here pretends, who has shewn so little Love for his Saviour, as earnestly to exhort the Deists to worry us with their usual Blasphemies of that holy Name? All the Belief, he can have from me in this, is to believe he can say any Thing. And this I think he has given the utmost Demonstration of to any one, who will be at the Pains of reading the before-mention'd latter Part of his accomplished Letter: which from the Beginning to the End I affirm to consist of nothing else, but one continued Chain of Hypocrisy and Lies; bating two Passages. The former is, when he assures his Reader of having

ing the boasted Gift of his Spirit within him: which I dare say will be readily allowed by every one, that considers how very unlikely it is for any, but a Person actually possessed with such a Spirit, to be the Author of such a Work. The latter is, where he frankly acknowledges, that they, who are led by such spiritual Men as himself, are *in general Men of weak understanding*: and happy it is, when they are so, both for themselves and others.

But presently after this latter Passage, we have him again at his old Trade, when to flatter his Dupes into the highest Thoughts (I had like to have said *Opinion*) of the Authority they have on their Side, he repeats the venerable Names of no fewer than ten of the primitive Fathers. Some of whom he agrees with Dr. *Middleton* in abusing, as scarce one Degree above mere Fools; most of them, as wretched Scholars; but what is worst of all, he enlists every one of them into the Number of his own BOTTOMLESS CATHOLICS, whose Religion cou'd be forged no where else, but in the bottomless Pit. But Happy it is for them, he has brought no other Proof for what he says than his usual one; He says so, and therefore it is so. What an Advantage do you think it is for a Man to have his Spirit? In the former Part of his Letter he frequently, and so far I conceive justly, calls upon the Doctor for Proof. But when it comes to his own Turn, to expect such a Thing

from him, is the highest Disparagement of his absolute Authority over all that can be called Religion, Reason, common Sense, or any Thing else; so it be but to serve an End.

And so I take my Leave of his extraordinary Letter, nor wou'd I trouble myself in raking longer in any of his Dunghills, were it not to have a Relish of his Poetry, after such a Surfeit of his Divinity.

This we have in a Book entitled, *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns*, under the Names of him and his Brother. Where every Thing that is good will be found to be stole from Persons destitute of their inward Light. But by Virtue of these illuminated Collectors those Works are now so far endowed with the Light, as quite to rob all Light from their own (if they be their own) Performances, which they had the Folly as well as Knavery to print along with them: By which Means these last are left like the stinking Weeds of so many Candles put out by the powerful Rays of the Sun. Yet still these Men's enchanted Followers have such a Gift of the Light within them, that they can see no Difference. This is another plain Discovery of the Honesty of these Men's Spirit, which can teach them to pyrate other People's Properties, and set their Names before the approved Works of nameless dead Authors promiscuously with their own. Which evidently appears



appears to be for no other End, but to set off their own Trash, and make themselves appear considerable in the Eyes of all, who chance to see any Part of the good, and overlook the rest. A safe Way, it seems, of collecting, which without running any Risk can fully answer their pious Ends, good Men.

I suppose you will conclude it enough to have only two Proofs of these Men's poetic Fire from their Light within; in which you will always find them to be upon the Marvellous. The former shall be from the first Stanza of their Performance called *A Thought of Affliction*, p. 32. 12mo. Which is as follows,

1. *Wilt thou, O Lord, regard my Tears  
The Fruit of Guilt and Fear?  
Me, who thy Justice have provok'd,  
O will thy Mercy spare.*

One wou'd think all this Force and Dulness cou'd hardly ever proceed from Invention; but from some difficult Translation; with which, notwithstanding all their Light within, they were far more hard put to it, than ever *Sternbold* and *Hopkins* were at their greatest Pinches.

But this is over-reached a whole Bar's Length (p. 61.) afterwards, in that inimitable Piece called, *A Prayer for one that is Lunatic*. The first and fifth Triplets of which run (or rather hobble) thus,

1. *Jesu!*

11. *Jesu! God of our Salvation*

*Hear our Call; save us all*

*By thy Death and Passion, &c.*

5. *Jesu! wound the Dragon, wound him;*

*Make him roar, Break his Power,*

*Let thine Arm confound him, &c.*

Did ever Mortal hear such Rant put up by People in their Wits, by Way of Prayer to God for the Distressed? This, if suited by a Tune agreeable to the proper Measure, might well pass for the second Part of the Ballad of mad *Tom*; tho', I dare say, not half so well composed as the first. By which, it seems, these inspired *Methodists* conceive no Method more proper to apply to Heaven in the Behalf of a mad Person, than by acting as if they were stark mad themselves.

And the Performance, which follows next after this, is cast in the very same Mould. All which may sufficiently convince us, that these two Murderers of Sense as well as Souls are just about as fitly cut out for Poets, as a lame Horse wou'd be for a Rope-dancer. Nor wou'd their Works deserve any Thing else, but to be laught at, were it not in Indignation to see them thus employed in abusing God himself. A Thing most horrible to think of!

But what is most grievous, is to see these Tools themselves impose upon so many Creatures in human Shape, as to gain so fatal a Pre-

Predominancy over them, that they are not only followed, but even adored by them. This can be resolved into Nothing but that high Opinion, which the most ignorant Persons are usually apt to have of their own Knowledge and Accomplishments, especially in Matters of Religion. And the Religion of these Seducers is exactly calculated to humour such sort of People in this Vice. A Vice, which Christianity is especially intended to drive from the Heart [*Luke xvi. 15. and xviii. 10—14. Rom. xii. 3, 16. 1 Cor. x. 12. Phil. ii. 12, &c.*] Nor do I know of any Thing, wherein Men can commonly shew a better Proof of their Self-denial, than in resolutely subduing this Traytor within. But these Men, as has been observed, teach such Persons under the Cloak of their Spirit, to trust in nothing but themselves; till in the End, as a just Punishment of their wilful Contempt of the Commandments of God: *God himself, as St. Paul has said, sends them strong Delusion, that they shou'd believe a Lie (2 Thes. ii. 11.)* which we see exactly verified in the deluded Followers of these wretched Impostors. For as soon as once they come to be possessed with an Opinion of the Light within them; there is an End of all further Hopes of them, without a Miracle of Mercy. This is the Height of that Malignity, which *Solomon* speaks of, *Prov. xxvi. 12*: when a Man removes that Trust, to his own Heart which  
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he ought only to place upon God, (*Prov.* xxvii. 6.) A Malignity to which Men are always too prone. The Heart of itself, we know, is deceitful above all Things [*Jerem.* xvii. 9.] and it is in Nothing more apt to misguide Men, than by persuading them, that they are most of all pleasing God, when they are only pleasing themselves. And as this Malignity is known to be most prevalent among the less discerning; so it is most notorious, that these Hypocrites seldom gain Profelytes but among them, or such as have some End to serve by it. Pure Christianity, among us, is always their Pretence: but if we measure them by the Standard of the abovementioned Letter, it appears as plain as the Noon-Day Sun, that this is so for no other Reason, but because they live in a Christian Country: All Religions being alike to them (Mahometism or Paganism) as well as Christianity.

And now after all, one wou'd hope few Arguments needful to convince Men of the great Wickedness and Danger (as well as Folly) of wittingly giving the least Countenance to such Impostors. Tho' at present you may profess yourself not to be their Follower; yet it is certain, that you countenance them every Time you go to hear them; this being the utmost for the Time they desire of you. You have here plainly laid before you their whole

Aim and End, which shou'd make you as much afraid to come near their Assemblies; as you wou'd be to put your Hand into the Den of a Cockatrice. You have heard how dreadfully the sacred Names of God and Christ are blasphemed by them to serve their wicked Purposes; and if you expect to find their Purposes changed, I am afraid you will be much mistaken. Perhaps, you will say you have hitherto heard no Hurt from them. Pray, consider honestly with yourself, whether you are a competent Judge of this. For Hypocrisy being their Trade, and the utmost seeming Sanctity their Disguise; it is no Wonder for you to take all they say for Good, while you are entirely ignorant of their Design, and still suppose them to be what they appear. But lest you shou'd take the gifted Teacher, who seems now to have fixed his Habitation in this City, to be of a different Cast; be pleased to look at a Part of that short Specimen of his Light within, which he has taken so much Pains to disperse about the Neighbourhood, under the sacred Text, *Swear not at all*: and if you find so much Turpitude in his studied Compositions, what can be expected from his extempore Effusions? The only Words of it, I shall repeat, are these. *He that believeth on* [I suppose he intends in] *bim* [i. e. *Christ within*] *batb everlasting Life. Mark that Word: He batb it. He batb it now. He batb the Begin-*

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ning of Heaven even upon Earth: For his Soul is fitted with the Love of God: And the Love of God is Heaven. [Mark that too.] He that truly believes on [I imagine he still intends in] Jesus Christ, hath a Peace which Earth cannot give: His Mind is always calm; he hath in every State therewith to be content: He is always easy, quiet, well pleased; always happy in Life and in Death. Here again you have a Description how much one of these Pharisaical Boasters thinks himself above every one else. And you still see that their Spirit resolves all Religion into the full Assurance and Complacency, they can take in themselves. Nothing can either shame or grieve them. But this Man seems to give us a further Insight, if we can guess at any Thing from his Words, that, when Men are once bewitched into an Opinion of this Light within, they take their God, their Christ, and themselves to be all the same Being. So that what they mean by the Love of God is still nothing else, but the Love of their own dear selves; which it seems is this Man's only Heaven: in which how happy soever he may boast himself to be, at present, we have the utmost Reason to believe; if he knew himself better here, it wou'd be much better for him hereafter. And when we see him cease from being so assiduous in deluding Men to blaspheme, we may judge him less hypocritical in the Shew he makes of his great Zeal to deter them from Swearing or any other Impiety.



But if any Credit can be given to those, who, we have good Reason to believe, are far more worthy of Credit, than one like him; we have all the Evidence that can be desired, that himself and his Abettors are remarkable for being, not only most impious Blasphemers of God, but also the most wicked Damners of their Brethren, that can any where be met with. For what else means the blasphemous Authority, they are so frequently known to assume to themselves, in pronouncing whom they please to be damned? Can a common-Swearer be more culpable than these in his Curses of others? Surely no: for his Heart seldom goes along with his Words: whereas these (it is to be feared,) do it with the utmost Pride and Malice of Heart, whatever they hypocritically pretend to the contrary. So that the utmost in this Case we can resolve the common-Swearer's Curses into, is a most profane taking of God's sacred Name in vain. But shou'd we allow him to be as bad as they, in thus belching out the Venom of his Heart; yet generally he is short by a League of their Wickedness, in pretending also the Authority of God for what he does. And are these Men, think we, fit Declaimers against common-Swearing, and such zealous Lovers of Souls, as upon every Occasion they pretend? But enough has been shewn to convince us, that they can always say what they please, and make a Handle of any Thing to serve their Turn.

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Again let this diabolical Gratification of their Pride remind you of the secret Cabals, which they are known so frequently to hold together. What can be expected from them in private, who dare be thus wicked in public? Certainly nothing good. They tell us these Meetings are only meant for the Exhortation of *one another to provoke unto Love, and to good Works.* [Heb. x. 24, 25.] They want not Scripture Phrases to meet us with upon every Turn. Nor can we otherwise know what is done in them, than by such as through some Disgust have deserted them. I will not say, they yet go so far as their devout Predecessors the *Adamites*: but this I dare venture to affirm and prove, that both are led by the same Spirit. And if the Leader, they now have, be their Father-Confessor, as some say he is; we may judge of his Accomplishment for the Work, from the excellent Performances, he has given in Print to them, that cannot find Leisure to hear the Inspirations immediately breathed into him from his Spirit. But to deliver the most charitable Thought we can have of these Cabals at present, is to suppose them intended for no other End than to afford them a freer Opportunity without Witnesses to please and gratify their *Pbarisaical* Pride, (which we know by them is generally interpreted *Edification*) in repeating their own supposed Excellencies, to which their Neighbour's Foibles must

must always be their Foil. This at a Tea-Table is commonly called Scandal: but it wou'd be Scandal indeed to hear any one resent whatever comes from their Tongues, as worthy of such a Name. Nor can any Christian scarce think of a greater Scandal to himself, than to have it judged by others, that he belongs to a Class of Men, who are such a Shame to Christianity. And I challenge the World, among all their pretended Converts, to find one Person ever converted to any Thing by them, unless it be to Pride, Affectation, and Hypocrisy; while others are driven into the blackest Despair, because they find themselves incapable ever to reach their boasted Perfections.

But for any true Change of Heart made in them from worse to better, you may judge by this one Instance. Among such a Number of Converts, if they were all such as Christ requires, it can hardly be expected but, as the World goes, there must be some *Zaccheus's* among them, who have formerly been guilty of defrauding or oppressing others in their just Property. Was it then ever heard, that any Person was so far wrought upon by these Men's Preaching, as to think it afterwards his Duty to make the least Restitution or Satisfaction for what he had before unjustly gotten; without which yet we know no Person can be such a Penitent, as Christ will accept? No, the Christ of these Deceivers wants no such Converts,



verts, nor were they ever known to insist upon the least Resemblance of it; unless so far as they can convert by it something into their own Pockets.

10 But the most dreadful Consideration to deter you from these Men's Assemblies is the great Danger of it to yourself. *Tertullian* in his Treatise of Shews attests it as a Fact of his own Knowledge, that a certain Christian Woman, having been at a Heathen Theatre, returned back possessed with a Devil. And the unclean Spirit being afterwards asked, How he durst make this Attempt upon a Christian? made Answer; I have Reason for so doing, having found her at my own House. When therefore at any Time you are tempted through an idle Curiosity to go to hear any of these Declaimers, consider well what you are doing. You are going to hear the sacred Names of God and Christ blasphemed to the worst of Purposes, your holy Religion impiously mocked, and the senseless Effusions of a dissembling Hypocrite interpreted to be the Language of the Holy Ghost. You may perhaps think yourself safe enough from being seduced by such a Person; but I am afraid several, who have thought themselves as safe in that Respect as you, have yet returned back bewitched into a quite contrary Mind. And certainly you need not be possessed with a worse Devil, than the Spirit of the above-mention'd *Letter-writer*. The Devil has his Converts, as well as God,  
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and who knows, but after such a Contempt put upon your Redeemer, you may be left as a Prey to him that desires nothing more than your Destruction?

In fine, scarce any Consideration can be more melancholy, than the Ravage we see made by these Emissaries of Satan among us at present. Which seems to be a Judgment of Heaven upon these Nations for the prophane Contempt, which has so long been put upon all Things sacred and religious. Certainly, no Calamity has befallen us for many Years, which called near so loudly for the solemn Fasts and Humiliations of the Church, to beseech God to preserve us from the Vengeance, which these abominable Blasphemies and daring Impieties threaten every Day to bring upon us. And for these deluded People themselves, we know of no better Means to bring them back again to their right Minds, than by such constant and earnest Intercessions put up for them at the Throne of Grace; *if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the Snare of the Devil, who are thus taken Captive by him at his Will* [2 Tim. ii. 25, 26.]

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at the Throne of Grace; if God be so disposed  
will give them Repentance to the acknowledgment  
of the Truth; and that they may receive the  
Fruit out of the Tree of the Tree of Life, and so  
that for a Corridor by him of his Will [a sin.  
in 2. 26.]



